

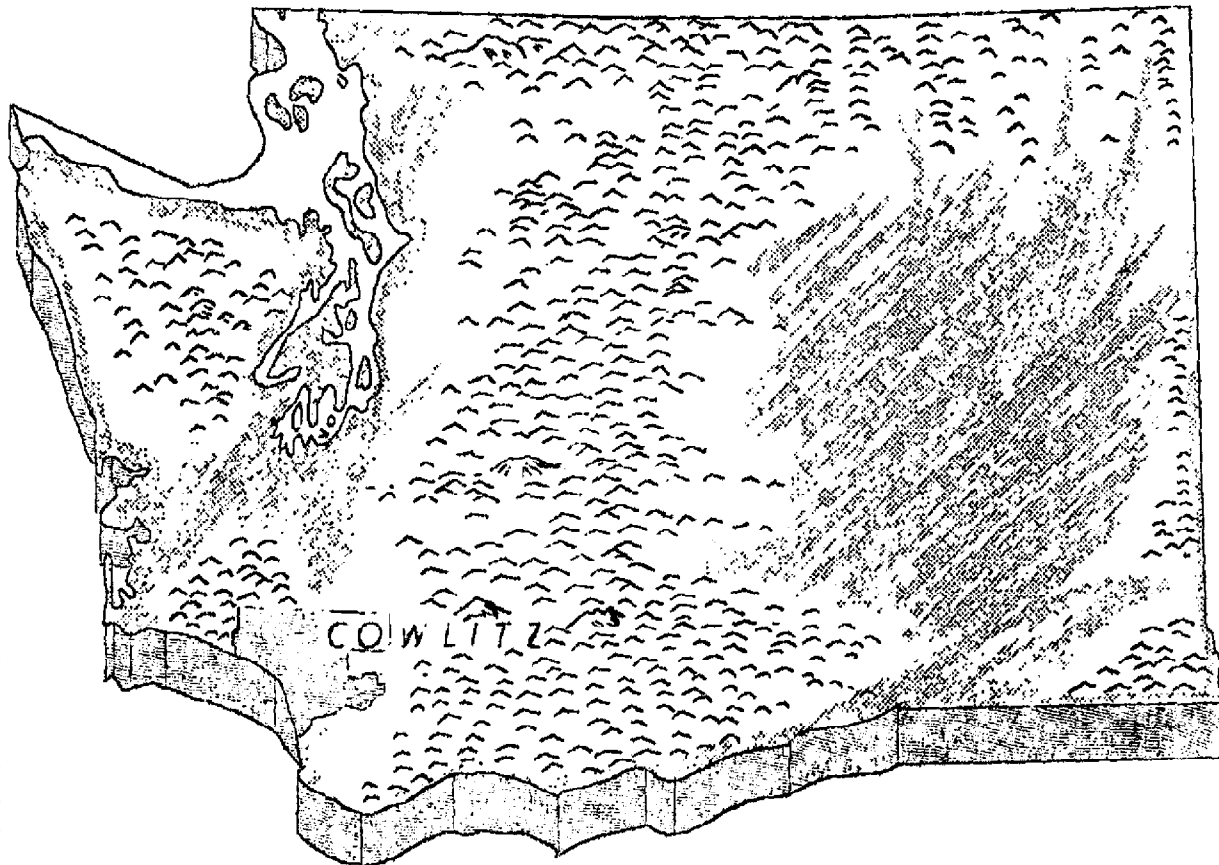
*Desk Copy*

# COWLITZ COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE

### WASHINGTON

COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DATA SERIES  
1956



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
J. D. Dwyer, Director

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Agricultural Marketing Service  
S. R. Newell

WASHINGTON CROP AND LIVESTOCK REPORTING SERVICE  
348 Federal Office Building  
Seattle 4, Washington

## FOREWORD

This book on Cowlitz County is one of an original series being devoted to the history and present nature of agriculture in each of the thirty-nine counties of the State of Washington. This project was initiated in 1956 through funds made available by Sverre N. Omdahl, Director, Washington State Department of Agriculture, 1948-56. State funds were matched by moneys from the United States Department of Agriculture under the Research and Marketing Act of 1946.

County agricultural data books are intended to serve a variety of needs. Continually changing conditions in a dynamic state such as Washington require constant planning by groups and individuals both in private enterprise and public service. Comprehensive knowledge of land resources, population and agricultural-economic trends in a local area such as Cowlitz County is of great value. This book will be useful for reference in public and private instruction by vocational agriculture and social studies teachers in Cowlitz County schools. It has been devised also to inform adults interested in knowing more about their immediate area, as well as persons and enterprises concerned with agricultural production and marketing or prospective settlement and investment in the county.

Carefully selected geographic facts, agricultural history, population trends and statistical data are included to give an over-all appreciation of Cowlitz County. The enumerations of the United States Censuses of Population and Agriculture since 1860 and recent estimates of the Washington State Census Board are summarized to give a perspective of development since the establishment of Cowlitz County in 1854. Facts on topography, soil, climate and forests which influence farming are integrated from surveys and reports of government agencies. Estimates of leading crops by years since 1939 by the Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service provide a measure of the trend in the agriculture of the county farm industry.

Acknowledgment is accorded the professional work of several persons. Immediate direction was under Emery C. Wilcox, Agricultural Statistician in Charge, Estimates Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Supervision, research and cartographic illustration was performed by Dr. Woodrow R. Clevinger, Market Analyst, Washington State Department of Agriculture. Edward S. Lippert, student in Agricultural Economics, Washington State College and resident of Port Orchard, Kitsap County and Lloyd J. Mercer, student in Agricultural Economics, Washington State College and resident of Addy, Stevens County, wrote the sections on pattern of agriculture, crops, livestock and marketing and collected much original information. Mr. Richard Perry, of the Washington State Department of Agriculture, and Leonard W. Orvold, D. W. Barrowman and Christian A. Stokstad, Agricultural Marketing Service, United States Department of Agriculture, gave valuable assistance. The clerical staff of the Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service prepared tabular material for the book.

J. D. Dwyer, Director  
Washington State Department of Agriculture

Olympia, Washington  
March 1, 1958

Funds for this bulletin provided by the Washington State Department of Agriculture were matched by the United States Department of Agriculture under the Research and Marketing Act of 1946.

## PART I

## History of Cowlitz County Agriculture

Introduction

Cowlitz County is an area of fertile bottom lands and forested Coast and Cascade Range country in southwestern Washington. Its lower Cowlitz Valley is the historic gateway into western Washington from Oregon. The lowlands once used by travelers and settlers moving northward into the Puget Sound country have become important in lumber production and agriculture. The Cowlitz Valley today is an artery of railroads and highways connecting Washington with Oregon and California.

Since 1937 the county has been the leading producer of lumber in Washington and agriculture has been of secondary importance. Along with industrial growth, agriculture has steadily increased in value and production. In 1954 about 15 percent of its 1,146 square mile area, or 110,073 acres out of a total of 733,440 acres, were in farms. Products sold from 1,487 farms were valued at \$2,827,106. While important, the value of agricultural products is greatly exceeded by lumber and other manufactured forest products processed at Longview, Kelso and other locations on tidewater. In 1954 the county ranked first in the state in lumber production and fifth in the value of all farm forest products sold. Its farming, much of it on a part-time basis, consists primarily of dairying and poultry raising with hay as the main crop. Peppermint is an important specialty crop. In 1955 the population was estimated at 58,600, giving Cowlitz tenth place among the 39 Washington counties.

History 1/

After early settlement by fur traders and homesteaders starting as early as 1838, the area was established as Cowlitz County by the Washington Territorial Legislature, April 21, 1854. The name was adopted from the Indian Cow e liskee or Cow e liske, meaning river of shifting sands. This name had been given by the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Indians discovered living at the mouth of the Cowlitz River in 1805 and the name later was given to the river and its valley lowlands.

## Table of Contents

	Page
Part I. History of Cowlitz County Agriculture	1
Part II. Cowlitz County Population - - - - -	5
Part III. Physical Description - - - - -	13
Part IV. The Pattern of Agriculture - - - - -	25
Part V. Crops - - - - -	33
Part VI. Livestock, Dairying and Poultry - - -	41
Part VII. Farm Marketing and Level of Living -	47
General Index - - - - -	54

Western civilization in Cowlitz County begins with the Columbia River explorations of the English in May of 1792. At that time a vessel belonging to the Captain George Vancouver expedition and commanded by Lt. W. R. Broughton sailed up the Columbia to as far as the present area of Cowlitz County. He named several geographic features of the area.

American exploration began with the expedition of Lewis and Clark. They skirted present Cowlitz County on their Columbia River passage toward the sea in 1805. In 1841 the Wilkes Expedition of the U. S. Navy explored the Cowlitz Valley. Starting in 1821 the Cowlitz River was traveled by fur traders in the employ of Hudson Bay Company. The British company had posts at Vancouver on the Columbia and at Nisqually on Puget Sound. The Cowlitz River was the natural avenue of travel which connected fur trading on the Sound and the Lower Columbia River.

In 1838 the Hudson Bay Company organized a subsidiary, the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, to produce food, hay and grain for use at forts in the Oregon country and to market to Russian fur traders in Alaska. A large farm was established in the upper Cowlitz Valley (near Toledo in present Lewis County) at the uppermost point vessels could reach on the river. Most of the grain and livestock was boated down the Cowlitz River. In 1841 the Hudson Bay Company settled Anton Gobar at the mouth of the Cowlitz River to be a herdsman for beef cattle grazing on the grasslands where Kelso and Longview are now located. The company also built warehouses near the Cowlitz delta for storing wood, hides and grain which were moved down from the upper Cowlitz area for shipment. While the British agricultural activity was not permanent, it was the beginning of such enterprise in the Cowlitz County area.

Settlement and the start of agriculture by Americans began in 1847 with the arrival of Crawford E. West and James O. Rayner. Crawford's land claim near the mouth of the Cowlitz River became the site of Kelso which he named after his hometown in Scotland. In the southern part of the county, Jonathan Barbee settled on the Kalama River and began farming in 1848. In 1849,

-----

1/ Material used in this historical and descriptive summary has been obtained from the following authors and publications:

- (1) Washington State Associations of County Commissioners and Engineers, 1953 Yearbook; in cooperation with the State College of Washington. Distributed by Seattle-First National Bank, Weyerhaeuser Timber Company and Standard Oil Company. The section on Cowlitz County, pp. 126-130, was prepared by the Works Project Administration (WPA), Washington Historical Records Survey.
- (2) Belle Reeves, Secretary of State, "The Counties of Washington", Section on Cowlitz County. Prepared by Richard M. Perry, Supervisor, Bureau of Statistics, Olympia, Washington, 1943. (Mimeographed).
- (3) Washington, A Guide to the Evergreen State, American Guide Series, compiled by the Federal Writers' Project, WPA. Published by the Washington State Historical Society. Portland, Oregon: Binfords & Mort, 1941. pp. 408-411.
- (4) John M. McClelland, Jr., Longview, The Remarkable Beginnings of a Modern Western City. Portland, Oregon: Binfords & Mort. 155 pages.

Nathaniel and David Stone, H. D. Huntington, Seth Catlin, R. C. Smith, James Redpath and James Porter all took donation land claims in the vicinity where the Cowlitz joins the Columbia River. H. D. Huntington founded the site of Monticello, which was an important location of social and political activity in the early days. This location was later to become the city of Longview.

Numerous settlers moving northward toward Puget Sound were attracted by the level but heavily wooded bottom lands along the Cowlitz River. As logging and lumbering activity began along the Columbia about 1852, population began to increase. Settlements of homesteaders and persons who combined farming with work in logging camps and sawmills created communities at Oakpoint, Stella, Carrollton, Kalama and Woodland on the banks of the Columbia. On low benchlands along the Cowlitz River the towns of Kelso, Ostrander and Castle Rock grew rapidly as the lumber industry expanded northward along the navigable parts of the stream. River traffic and the shipping facilities provided early farmers on the Cowlitz bottom lands with a local market and an outlet toward the larger towns on the Columbia River.

After the county was established in 1854, there was much debate and controversy over the location of the county seat and over the problem of roads to connect the communities which were dependent solely on boat traffic for commerce. Monticello was the first county seat. After a series of elections Kalama became the county seat in 1872, but with the population center at the mouth of the Cowlitz River, another election in 1922 awarded the courthouse site to Kelso.

A major turning point in the history and economy of Cowlitz County came in 1921. Following the purchase of 70,000 acres of timber in the Cowlitz area, the Long-Bell Lumber Company decided to build a large mill and a planned city on a Columbia River tidewater site. The level land on the west side of the Cowlitz River delta was selected. About 14,000 acres were purchased, including the village of Monticello and its surrounding farms established by the early settlers of 1849. The planned city of Longview was founded and platted for an estimated population of 14,000 persons. A lumber and grain port was established on the low river plain lands. Long-Bell Lumber Company and later the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company and Longview Fibre Company established the largest mills in the United States at Longview.

Shipment and storage of wheat brought by rail from eastern Washington and Oregon became important after the Continental Grain Company and the Longview Grain Elevator were established. By 1930 industrialization made Longview grow into one of the primary lumber and forest products centers of the Pacific Northwest. Employment and part-time farming in the lower Cowlitz increased. An important local market was created for the valley farmers in the industrialized area of Longview and Kelso where about 33,000 people were living by 1955. Industrialization at the mouth of the Cowlitz River increased the Cowlitz County population over three times between 1920 and 1940; it grew from 11,791 to 40,155 in 20 years time.

Agricultural development of Cowlitz County has been encouraged and guided by a number of public agencies, private enterprises, individuals, technicians and skilled farm product producers. An important contribution has been made

by the Washington State College Southwestern Washington Experiment Station at Vancouver and the Western Washington Experiment Station at Puyallup. The County Extension Service, through county agents based at Kelso, has provided technical assistance which has improved dairy husbandry, horticulture and farm forestry. Dairying, particularly in the field of marketing, has been advanced through cooperative organization in the Cowlitz County Dairymen's Association. Poultry farming and marketing has been improved by Cowlitz County producer members of the Washington Cooperative Farmers' Association with stations at Longview, Woodland and Winlock. Berry production and marketing has been aided by the Cloverdale Cooperative Berry Association at Kalama. Filbert growers have received guidance from the Washington Nut Growers Association at Vancouver. Vegetable grower members in the Washington Cannery Cooperative at Vancouver have furthered quality production of commercial vegetables. Increasing importance of farm forestry is being attained through membership activity in the Cowlitz County organization of the Western Washington Farm Forestry Association. Most of these associations have been founded and expanded in the last twenty years.